

Opportunities of Tourism in Kolar District of Karnataka-A Study

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Abstract: *Tourism is an important service and entertainment linked economic activity. Tourism is one of the world's largest industries which is the major source of income. The promotion of any place as a tourist destination leads to the economic development of that area and opens various kinds of employment avenues for the local people as well. These are in the nature of tour operations, travel agencies, restaurants, hotels and working as guides. Tourism embraces every walk of life. The Kolar District is located at a distance of about 43 miles from Bangalore and 20 miles from Kolar Gold Fields. The city is located on the southern maidan (plains) region of Karnataka. The Kolar District has several attractive places with historical, cultural and religious importance. The study throws light on the opportunities and major challenges faced by Kolar District in the tourism industry. It is observed from the study that lack of various supporting systems, amenities and facilities restricted Kolar District to attract more number of tourist's particularly foreign tourists in spite of having exotic tourist locations across the district.*

Keywords: Destination, Infrastructure, Kolar, Opportunities, Tour and Tourism

1. Introduction

In the globalized scenario the state of Karnataka is popularly known as “*One State, Many Worlds*”.¹ It attracts tourists and historians from all over the world. It has secured several awards from the Government of India in the sphere of tourism. The district of Kolar is one of the prominent centers attracting even international tourists with its rich cultural heritage and tourist attractions. The district is popularly known as “*the Land of Gold*” in the historical annals.² The district has a rich religious, cultural, social, and historical heritage over a period of thousands of years. At present it has significant religious, historical, and cultural heritage centers. By attracting national and international tourist population the district made a significant contribution to safeguard its cultural heritage.

2. Derivation of the Name of “Kolar”

The district of Kolar had several names like *kolahala*, *kuvalala*, *kolahalapura* and *kuvalapura*.³ The lord *Karthaveeryarjuna* used to rule over the district. He was felicitated by a sage with the assistance of a cow called *Surabhi* when he had paid a visit to the hermitage of *Jamadagni*. When he tried to snatch away a sacred cow he was killed by *Parushurama*, the son of *Jamadagni*. Subsequently, the sage *Jamadagni* was killed by the children of the lord. The wife of the sage also performed “*Satisahagaman*”. In the light of the above incidents the angry *Parushurama* killed the children of *Karthaveeryarjuna* in a war. The ‘*Kolahala*’ created by these wars gave the name of ‘*Kolahala*’. Moreover, the temple of ‘*Kolaramma*’⁴ was built in memory of the wife of *Jamadagni*.

3. Noteworthy Tourist Spots

The emperors belonging to various kingdoms viz. Ganga, Nalamba, Baana, Vydumba, Chola, Hoysala, Chalukya, Vijayanagara, Marathas, Mughals, Hyder, Tippu, British,

Mysore Wodeyars ruled over the district of Kolar. The dynasties of feudal lords from the 13th century to 19th century were confined to the places like *Gummanayakanapalya*, *Chikkaballpura*, *Sidlaghatta*, *Gudibande*, *Yagavakote*, *Sugaturu*, *Harappanayakanahalli* and *Tadigol*.⁵ These rulers made a significant contribution to the economic, social, and cultural development of the district.

In the undivided Kolar district there were eleven taluks namely Chintamani, Kolar, Bagepalli, Gudibande, Srinivasapura, Mulabagilu, Maluru, Bangarapet, Chikkaballapura, Gowribidanuru, and Sidlaghatta. Each and every taluk has places of historical, religious, and cultural importance. The tourist centers attract tourists from national and international level. The district has the proud privilege of having very important places like *Banahalli*, *Arabikothanuru*, *Santhekallahalli*, *Peresandra*, *Srinivasapura*, *Kadagathur* and *Budikote* which reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Stone Age.⁶ It also contains several royal places with all their splendour and glory. The glorious and rich heritage places of the district continued to attract the tourists.

The taluk of Srinivasapura has an attractive tourist places like *Hebbatta*, *Tadigol*, *Pulagurakote*, *Sunakallu*, *Haralakunte*, and *Gummaredypura*.⁷ The sculptures of the town date back to the Stone Age culture. The ancient pictures of animals were inscribed on the hills of *Sunakallu* in the taluk of Srinivasapura.⁸ These hillocks became adventurous places for tourists.

The famous taluk of Malur has many tourist places like *Madivala*, *Chikkatirupati*, *Thorannahalli*, *Kadathuru*, *Shivarapatna* and *Tekal*. *Chikkatirupati* is one of the sacred places in the taluk of Malur. The Stone images of *Shivarapatna*⁹ are well-known all over the world. The stone images of various gods and goddesses were exported to several countries. *Tekal* is also a sacred place in the taluk. The *Dharmarayaswamy karaga* celebrated during “*Chaithra Masa*” has assumed national importance.

Banahalli which belonged to New Stone Age is also found in the taluk of Malur attracting tourists.¹⁰ *Antharagange* is one of the most attractive tourist places in the taluk of Kolar. The place of '*Aadima*' at Antharagange attracts thousands of tourists during the fullmoon. Several art groups of the state of Karnataka perform cultural activities in this place. The tourists from all over the country prefer this place for trekking.

The taluks of Mulabagilu, Chikkaballapura, Bagepalli, Gowribidanur, and Chintamani have an attractive heritage, historical and religious tourist places like *Avani*, *Kurudumale*, *Harappanayakanahalli*, *Nandi hills*, *Skandagiri*, *Nandi village*, *Hariharapura*, *Rangasthala*, *Gopinatha hill*, *Kanive Basava*, *Papagni mut*, *Gummanayakanapalya fort*, *Guluru mut*, *Adinarayana hill*, *Surasadmagiri*, *Vidhurashwatha*, *Darinayakanapalya*, *Kaiwara*, *Ambajidurga*, *Almbagiri*, *Muragamale*, *Konakuntlu* and *Burudagunte*.¹¹

4. Cultural Heritage:

The district of Kolar has an important cultural heritage spots in the state of Karnataka. The fine arts of this district have become famous at the national level. The folk dances and other types of traditional dance are displayed here during various cultural activities. The '*karaga*'¹² of Malur town continuous to attract the tourists of various parts of the country. Even today the district is famous for various types of arts like '*Janapada nruthya*', '*karaga*', '*karadi kunitha*', '*sopane pada*', '*geegi pada*', '*hari kathe*', '*bura katha*', '*dollu kunitha*', '*kamsale pada*', '*bajane*', '*kolata*', '*veeragase*' and '*yoga*'.

The '*karaga*' dance of Malur has brought laurels to the district. The folk artist of *Pindipanahalli* 'Munivenkatappa' and his art '*tamate*' have become famous at the international level.

Anjanappa of Gowribidanur has established a name in the state of Karnataka by his art called '*mukhaveene*'.¹³ The district of Kolar is known for its rich historical and cultural heritage.

5. Tourist Opportunities in Kolar District:

As the Indian tourism motto is '*Athithi Devobhava*' (Guest is God),¹⁴ the state of Karnataka is popularly known as '*One State, Many Worlds*'.¹⁵ The district succeeded in

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²⁰

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Kolar	7,01,326	7,30,569	7,79,258	8,05,259	8,34,145	8,67,236	8,93,865
Karnataka	1,19,96,053	1,59,02,666	1,80,00,000	1,41,17,464	1,86,78,670	1,11,75,292	1,11,30,814

As per the above data there is a considerable increase of domestic tourists in the Kolar district.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²¹

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Kolar	4,102	5,308	6,133	7,445	8,256	8,936	10,980
Karnataka	2,49,836	2,29,720	2,08,000	1,40,703	59,545	2,49,903	5,30,225

As per the above data there is a considerable increase of foreign tourists in the Kolar district.

attracting national and international tourists. Bengaluru, the IT hub of South India, is located just 30 k. m. away from the district of Kolar. The employees of IT and BT of Bengaluru spend their weekends with their families in the tourist places of this district. The summer resort of *Nandi hills* and the hillocks of *Kaiwara*, *Tekal*, *Antharagange*, *Kurudumale*, *Avani*, *Gummanayakanapalya*, *Seethi*, *Muragamale*, *Mulabagilu*, *Gopinatha*, and *Markandeshwar* etc. provide peace, happiness and entertainment to the tourists.¹⁶ The tourists also take up activities like trekking and other adventurous feats. The district has some tourist forts with the importance of history and heritage. Some of the popular forts are *Nandi fort*, *Gummanayakanapalya*, *Ambajidurga*, *Rehamangad*, *Sugaturu*, *Muragamale*, *Yagavakote*, *Harappanayakanahalli*, *Kote betta*, *Darinayakanapalya*, *Skandagiri*, and *Surasadmagiri*. The young entrepreneurs have ample opportunities for investment in the entertainment projects. Despite this the district has hundreds of religious centers.

The Department of State Archives, the Government of Karnataka and Archaeological Survey of India at the national and state level identified more than 20 prominent heritage tourist spots in the district.¹⁷ The district also has a considerable number of opportunities for eco-tourism. It is admirable to note that the places like Kolar, Bagepally, Antharagange, and Markandeshwara have taken initiatives to establish eco-parks to encourage tourism.¹⁸

The district of Kolar is located 50 k. m. away from Bengaluru International Airport. The airport provides an easy access to the development of tourism in this district. The world-famous summer resort of Nandi hills is located 30 k. m. away from the airport. It attracted about one crore tourists during the year 2012-13.¹⁹ The recent railway broad-gauge introduced by the Indian Railway via Bengaluru-Chikkaballapura-Chintamani-Srinivasapura-Kolar-Bengaluru would make a significant contribution to the tourism development in the district. Despite tourism, the service industries relating to food, accommodation, hotel, resort, and travel agency are bound to enhance the employment opportunities in the district. The district has also a wide scope for establishing tourist circuits.

6. Flow of Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrivals in Kolar District

The data mentioned hereunder illustrate the tourist flow in Karnataka in general and Kolar district in particular;

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²²

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Kolar	10,65,236	13,35,478	16,45,687	17,58,964	19,36,598	16,25,896	20,32,123
Karnataka	2,46,98,243	2,46,98,243	3,61,95,907	3,78,25,953	3,70,10,928	3,27,29,679	3,82,02,077

As per the above data there is an increase of domestic tourists from 2004 to 2010 excluding 2009 in the Kolar district.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²³

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Kolar	11,256	12,563	11,798	13,678	13,256	13,629	14,553
Karnataka	5,40,356	5,45,225	5,05,524	5,34,563	5,20,041	5,29,847	5,24,573

As per the above data there is an increase of foreign tourists from 2004 to 2010 excluding 2008 and 2009 in the Kolar district.

Domestic Tourist Arrivals:²⁴

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kolar	35,36,456	42,43,691	65,20,236	74,36,869
Karnataka	8,41,07,390	9,41,00,000	10,35,00,000	11,25,364

As per the above data there is a significant increase of domestic tourists from 2011 to 2013 and the projected number of tourists for the year 2014 is 74,36,869.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals:²⁵

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Kolar	18,354	23,459	31,658	40,200
Karnataka	5,74,005	6,65,369	7,23,258	8,10,256

As per the above data there is a significant increase of foreign tourists from 2011 to 2013 and the projected number of tourists for the year 2014 is 40,200.

In the light of the above statistics it becomes clear that there is a wide scope for the growth of national and international tourism in the Kolar district. It also throws light on the substantial potentiality for the development of tourism. The study indicates that it is very essential to enhance accommodation and food facilities in the form of resorts, hotels, cottages, and guest houses.

7. Conclusion

The tourism industry has a great deal of untapped potential to help expand economic opportunities in local communities. The potential hinges upon inclusive business models that integrate the poor into value chains as employees, suppliers, retailers, customers, and beneficiaries, thereby enabling them to build their economic and human capital assets. Because tourism is often the main industry in otherwise isolated locations, relatively small changes can have disproportionate benefits. The tourism development of the district can be effectively taken up by addressing the challenges of transportation, hospitality, and health care.

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Author Profile



M.N. Raghu, Head and Assistant Professor, Department of History, Government College for Women, Chintamani, Chikkaballapura District, Karnataka, India-563125, has done his post graduation in **History** in the **Bangalore University, Bangalore** in the year 2004 securing **1st Rank**. In recognition of his **1st Rank** he was awarded 2 (Two) **Gold Medals**. He started his career as a **Police Constable** in the Karnataka State Police Department in the year 2005 and he was declared the **"Best Police Constable"** by the Police Department for his meritorious service. Then he joined the **Department of Pre-University Education**, Govt. of Karnataka, in the year 2007 through the **Karnataka Public Service Commission** as **Lecturer in History**.

Later on he was appointed as **Assistant Professor of History** in the year 2009 through the **Karnataka Public Service Commission** by the **Department of Collegiate Education**, Govt. of Karnataka. It is admirable to note that he secured **4th Rank** in the selection of **Assistant Professors**.

His outstanding academic achievement is that he successfully and effectively organized a **National Seminar** on **"Economic, Social, Political and Cultural History of Karnataka"** in the year 2013. Despite this he has attended more than **20** conferences and seminars and has presented research papers in National and State level Conferences. He has published more than **10** research articles in National and Refereed journals. He is also a life member of the **South Indian History Congress** and **Karnataka History Congress**. As a resource person he has been offering coaching classes in the spheres of **IAS, KAS** and other competitive examinations. His role in the research and other innovative activities in the current institution is really noteworthy. At present he is engaged in his **Ph.D.**, research work on **"Kolar Jilleya Pravasodhyama - Ondu Ihihasika Adhyana"** (Tourism Development in Kolar District- A Historical Study) in the **Bangalore University**.

